

**TOWN OF DAVIE
WORKSHOP MEETING
APRIL 11, 2005**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at the meeting were Mayor Truex, Vice-Mayor Hubert, Councilmembers Crowley, Paul and Starkey. Also present were Interim Town Administrator Kovanes, Town Attorney Kiar, and Town Clerk Muniz recording the meeting.

Parks and Recreation Director Dennis Andresky provided a PowerPoint presentation on issues facing the Town in order to make a dog park a reality. The presentation included the estimated costs for development at existing sites, maintenance expenses and staff costs depending on whether a staff member was assigned to stay at the park or that it just be opened and closed by staff personnel. Mr. Andresky indicated that Risk Manager Dan Lutzke had no significant concerns regarding liability or risk to the Town in having a dog park.

Having considered several locations, it was the consensus of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board that Robbins Lodge and the Flamingo Road/SW 14th Street sites were the most feasible. Mr. Andresky advised of the advantages and disadvantages and answered questions specific to these locations. He advised that Mr. Kiar was in the process of researching if there were any prohibitions or restrictions against the dog park being located on the Robbins Lodge property.

Councilmember Paul expressed the concerns of some residents that the dog park would take away from the passive aspect established at Robbins Lodge. She thought it would be more suitable to be more closely located to higher density areas where large yards were scarce and asked Mr. Andresky if he had looked at possible properties which were more centrally located. Mr. Andresky responded that he had not looked at new sites to purchase although the possibility had been discussed among the Parks and Recreation Advisory Boardmembers. He added that one of the Boardmembers had indicated that there were several sites along Pine Island Road that were a possibility should the Council want to go in that direction.

Councilmember Paul asked if the selection of the 14th Street location had to do with the 1996 resolution which designated three parcels of land along the Flamingo Road corridor for open space. Mr. Andresky responded affirmatively and added that it was considered since a use had not been established at that site.

Councilmember Paul stated that considering that there may be a bond referendum, the wording would not preclude the possibility that property could be purchased for a dog park. Mr. Andresky concurred that Council had indicated that if it did not want to use an existing park, it would be easy to include in the bond referendum.

Vice-Mayor Hubert asked Mr. Andresky if he had been to Snyder Park. Mr. Andresky responded negatively and Vice-Mayor Hubert spoke of the amenities offered at the dog park and the charges on weekends.

Councilmember Crowley asked about the operations of an unstaffed facility and how it was accomplished. Mr. Andresky spoke of the issues which required staffing; however, most of the dog parks he had visited utilized signage or hold harmless waivers. Councilmember Crowley suggested contemplating the worst case scenario and add in the costs for eight to ten hours of staff.

Councilmember Starkey thought that there would be other parks to be considered, not narrowed down to just two parks. She indicated that in moving forward with the potential for an open space bond, other sites should be considered.

Councilmember Starkey agreed with Councilmember Paul's assessment that Robbins Lodge was a passive park and she spoke of her personal experience and the way her dog reacted to horses. Although she believed that Council should move forward with a dog park, she wanted to look for the right place and the right fit for the use. Councilmember Starkey mentioned three regional dog parks which charged fees

TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
APRIL 11, 2005

and indicated that the Town should look at doing that in order to avoid everyone from coming to the Town's dog park because it was free on the weekends. She pointed out that there could be an option to waive fees for Town residents and added that the fees would offset the maintenance costs. Mr. Andresky responded positively and indicated that knowing the direction from Council, he would research the aforementioned possibilities. He offered his own interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan, which was that open space and passive parks would not include a dog park.

Mayor Truex agreed with making a commitment for a dog park. He was optimistic that the bond would pass and that a land acquisition could include a dog park. However, if the bond did not pass, then placement at an existing park should be revisited. Mayor Truex indicated that he was not leaning toward charging admission fees. He believed it would be better to wait a year or so for a great park rather than to try and "shoe horn" one into what existed. Mayor Truex asked why the field at Betty Booth Roberts Park had not been considered. Mr. Andresky stated that this area was intended to be an open play area. After a brief discussion, it was decided that Betty Booth Roberts Park was a good site to be considered if the bond did not pass.

Mayor Truex asked if anyone wished to speak about this issue.

Fran Pellizano spoke in support of a dog park. She had researched the pros and cons of dog parks and distributed literature on the subject. Ms. Pellizano advised that people were already bringing their dogs on the grounds at Robbins Lodge. Mayor Truex asked what her opinion was regarding waiting for a year or two in order to acquire a parcel specifically for dogs. Ms. Pellizano indicated that she was willing to wait for an ideal location. Councilmember Starkey questioned how dogs were checked for inoculations. Ms. Pellizano responded that it was random although it was listed in the rules at all the facilities.

Marie Ari indicated that her dogs had been randomly checked for inoculations at Happy Tails Dog Park in Plantation. She was in support of having a dog park with ancillary uses and spoke of the prospects.

Janet Thomas spoke in support of the dog park and the possibility of "matches" being held at a dog park. She clarified the American Kennel Club rules regarding "trials" and indicated that the dog parks were not set up for that purpose. Ms. Thomas offered her assistance in acquiring playground equipment.

Bette Gibson, 4300 SW 73 Terrace, spoke in support of a dog park.

Marie Etzler, 15040 Windbluff Street, spoke in support of the dog park and offered to assist and participate in whatever was needed to help this effort. She distributed dog park packets of what worked and did not work at other parks so the wheel would not have to be reinvented. Ms. Etzler was in favor of waiting for a larger park that would be located in the right place.

Tina Wright, 3930 SW 61 Avenue, was in support of the dog park. She spoke of "the swim" which was offered at Snyder Park; however, the other part of the facility was too small. Ms. Wright was in favor of waiting for a large park as the smaller ones did not hold up well.

Linda Greck, 3121 SW 61 Avenue, indicated that she was the Vice-Chair of the Open Space Advisory Committee which supported the dog park at the right location. Her concern was about the fencing to be used around the locations.

Karen Stenzel-Nowicki, 5480 SW 55 Avenue, shared literature regarding the recently opened dog park at Markham Park. She was indifferent to the proposal of a dog park and addressed the liability matters. Ms. Stenzel-Nowicki indicated that there had been some contrasting information with regard to staffing and spoke of the staffing issue which presently confronted the operations at Markham Park. She advised of other issues regarding the maintenance of the facility and asked that Council consider all the aspects of this proposal.

TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
APRIL 11, 2005

Sandra Amaya, 5661 Thornbluff Avenue, responded to the liability issues pointed out by Ms. Stenzel-Nowicki. She used the City of Sanford as an example of an unstaffed facility and how the regulations were posted.

Councilmember Paul asked Mr. Kiar if posted signs would preclude the Town from being sued. Mr. Kiar could not give a through conclusion as to whether or not the Town would be thoroughly insulated. He indicated that if someone were to be bit by a dog, there was always the potential for litigation.

Mayor Truex summarized the action points made during the meeting which were: 1) that Council was committed to providing a dog park and would put it in the capital budget only if the bond failed; 2) to compose the language in the bond to make sure that the bond money could be used to acquire a dog park; and 3) to be sure that any educational material issued on the bond proposal clearly specify that a portion of the money would be used for a dog park.

Mr. Kovanes asked what Council's disposition was on user fees. It was the consensus that this detail be determined in the distant future; however, Council would like to know what the options were.

Councilmember Crowley interjected that he would like to keep the Betty Booth Roberts Park as an option since it was in an area where a dog park was needed and which was centralized between Markham and Snyder Parks. He suggested that the costs for the equipment be more realistic. Mr. Andresky explained that in order to keep the costs down, his estimates were based on "in house" building; however, he would provide estimates on purchasing the equipment.

Councilmember Starkey suggested that there be handicapped participation areas included which Council agreed was a good idea.

An unidentified woman asked if there was a timetable set for the bond issue. Mayor Truex responded that a decision would be made in the near future as to when the referendum would be placed on the ballot. Following a brief discussion, Council determined that March 2006 would be the latest that the referendum would be on the ballot.

Councilmember Paul stated that she would have Mr. Riska contact the residents who spoke as he initially suggested this project to her in 1999. Councilmember Starkey was also aware of a group from the Tree Tops Park area that would be interested in working with this group on this project.

A resident asked where she could find more information on the bond issue and how it would affect her financially. Mayor Truex suggested that since it would be discussed within the next month or two, she check the Town's webpage for the agenda or contact and come to the Council meeting when it was discussed. He advised the residents that they were doing an excellent job of keeping the Council informed and promoting this issue.

There being no further business to discuss and no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44.m.

Approved _____

Mayor/Councilmember

Town Clerk

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